

FOREWORDS BY JON KABAT-ZINN AND DANIEL GOLEMAN

# Search Inside Yourself

THE UNEXPECTED PATH TO ACHIEVING  
SUCCESS, HAPPINESS (AND WORLD PEACE)



CHADE-MENG TAN

"This book and the course it's based on represent one of the greatest aspects of Google's culture—that one individual with a great idea can really change the world."

### **Body Scan**

In Chapter 1, we mentioned that emotion is a physiological experience, therefore the best way to create a high-resolution awareness of emotion is by applying mindfulness to the body. The simplest way to do it is to bring mindfulness to your body all the time. Every time you bring mindful attention to your body, you create conditions for neurological changes that allow you to become even more perceptive of your body, and consequently, of the process of emotion.

For those of you who like to do things systemically, there is a formal practice called body scan. It is one of the core practices in Jon Kabat-Zinn's highly successful Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. The practice itself is very simple: we just systematically bring moment-to-moment non-judging attention to different parts of our bodies, starting from the top of our head and moving down to the tips of our toes (or vice versa), noticing all sensation or lack of sensation. Remember that the important thing is attention, not sensation. Hence, it does not matter if you experience sensation or not, it only matters that you pay attention.

In MBSR, depending on the teacher, this practice can last for twenty to forty-five minutes. In *Search Inside Yourself*, the practice is shorter, concentrating only on parts of the body most involved in the experience of emotion. In addition, because *Search Inside Yourself* is primarily an emotional intelligence course, we also invite participants to experience their physiological correlates of emotion during the second half of the sitting.

## **BODY SCAN**

### **Settling Attention**

Let us begin by sitting comfortably for 2 minutes. Sit in a position that enables you to be both relaxed and alert at the same time, whatever that means to you.

*(continued)*

Now, let us breathe naturally and bring very gentle attention to the breath. You can either bring attention to the nostrils, the abdomen, or the entire body of breath, whatever that means to you. Become aware of in breath, out breath, and space in between.

## **Scan Body**

### **Head**

Now bring your attention to the top of your head, ears, and back of your head. Notice sensations, or lack of sensations, for 1 minute.

### **Face**

Now move your attention to your face. Your forehead, eyes, cheeks, nose, lips, mouth, and inside of your mouth (gums, tongue) for 1 minute.

### **Neck and Shoulders**

Move your attention to your neck, the inside of your throat, and your shoulders for 1 minute.

### **Back**

Move your attention to your lower back, mid back, and upper back for 1 minute. The back carries a lot of our load and stores a lot of our tension. So let us give our backs the kind and loving attention they deserve.

### **Front**

Now move your attention to the chest and stomach for 1 minute. If it is possible for you, try to bring attention to your internal organs, whatever that means to you.

### **Entire Body at Once**

And now, bring your attention to your entire body all at once for 1 minute.

## Scan for Emotion

Did you find any emotion in your body? If there is any, just notice its presence in the body. If not, just notice the absence of emotions, and catch one if it arises in the next 2 minutes.

### **Positive Emotion**

Let us now try to experience a positive emotion in the body.

Bring to mind a memory of a happy, joyous event or a time when you were optimal and productive or a time when you felt confident.

Experience the feeling of positive emotion. Now, bring your attention to your body. What does that positive emotion feel like in the body? In the face? Neck, chest, back? How are you breathing? Any difference in level of tension? Let us just experience it for 3 minutes.

## Returning to Grounding

Let us now return to the present. If you find an emotionally charged thought, just let it go.

Bring your attention to either your body or your breath, whichever your mind finds more stability in. And let's just settle the mind there for 2 minutes.

(Long pause)

Thank you for your attention.

Notice that we only invite you to bring up a positive emotion in this exercise, not a negative one. We wait until the next chapter to do an exercise involving negative emotions because that is when we introduce tools for dealing with them. In class, we also do not want to ask our participants to bring up negative emotions without first introducing tools to manage them because doing so would upset our lawyers, and we like our lawyers.

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I want to encourage everyone to try out the formal body scanning practice because it has many important benefits. First, it works better than just merely bringing mindfulness to day-to-day activities. The main reason is focus. When you are doing normal activities, you can likely only dedicate a small percentage of your attention to your body, unless you have a highly trained mind, like Thich Nhat Hanh does, or your activity involves devoting full attention to your body, as in competitive dancing, or you are Thich Nhat Hanh engaged in competitive dancing. In contrast, if you are doing nothing else but formal body scanning, you can focus far more of your attention to your body, and attention is what drives neurological change.

One of the participants in our Search Inside Yourself class is a manager called Jim. After a few weeks of practicing body scan, he told me, "I realized that I suppressed emotions into my body. That made me experience physical disablement that would frequently cause me to miss work. This practice has helped me come to work more frequently." Jim has nine direct reports, so his practice benefited at least ten people at work. ("Jim" is not his real name, but I assure you he has a real body.)



"Scan your own body!"

A second benefit of body scan is it helps you sleep. I know that because in MBSR, participants practice body scan lying down and in every class,

at least one person ends up snoring (with everyone else thinking, "Stop snoring. I'm trying to meditate, damn it!"). I am not entirely sure why body scan is so conducive to sleep, but from my own experience, I can think of a few reasons. By bringing attention to the body, we are helping it relax. Very often, bodily tension builds up because we are not paying attention to the body, so the mere presence of attention corrects that problem. Also, body scan and other gentle, mindfulness-based exercises bring the mind to rest. So body scan relaxes both the body and the mind, and if you do it lying down, it is easy to fall asleep. If you have problems sleeping, this might help you.

**RIGHT WAY TO SCAN  
YOUR BODY:**



**WRONG WAY TO SCAN  
YOUR BODY:**

